



West Valley View

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Proposed Town Hall site challenged

But Buckeye meeting attracts only 8 residents

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Buckeye's second town hall meeting drew only eight residents, and one of them wanted to know why council members chose to place the new Town Hall facility in a dying downtown.

At Monday's town hall meeting at Sundance Elementary School, the eight residents listened to presentations by department heads. Approximately 20 town employees also attended.

Community Services Director Jeanine Guy, Police Chief Dan Saban, Fire Chief Scott Rounds, Public Works Director Scott Lowe and Town Manager Dave Wilcox gave presentations, and a question-and-answer period followed.

What is happening downtown?

Wilcox addressed downtown revitalization and the future Town Hall.

Two of the Town Council's "highest goals" were to revitalize downtown and build a new Town Hall facility, Wilcox said.

The town has plans for up to three municipal buildings in the downtown area, and the presence of employees downtown would draw businesses, he said.

"People will see that there is activity downtown," Wilcox said, adding the town would seek out public-private partnerships to help the revitalization efforts.

Parking and street improvements are also planned for the area, he said.

The Town Council had "the foresight to purchase that [downtown] land [for Town Hall] some time ago," Wilcox said, adding the Town Hall site would be strictly municipal.

The site would not consist of public-private partnerships because the municipal site would be "integrated" with the private developments to the east, west and south.

"This municipal site will serve the area for a long time to come," he said.

Why build it there?

At least one resident had questions about the location choice for the municipal facility.

"Why are you putting Town Hall in old Buckeye when the population is moving north and west?" Craig Heustis asked.

Heustis said there are beautiful locations north of Interstate 10 "if you want to look at the future."

Heustis also pointed out that many of the current council members are long-time residents of what was once a smaller Buckeye, and that the future promises a higher concentration of population in places away from old town.

The location makes more sense when considering the number of large developments planned for south of the proposed site, Councilman Bob Doster said.

"I don't know where the real downtown will be in the future, but in the present this is the place," Doster said, adding it would serve the area "for another 20 years or so, and then there will be a better place."

Placing Town Hall downtown "makes sense now," Mayor Bobby Bryant said, adding it would be only one of several facilities by the time the town reaches build-out.

Bryant also said the town has "committed about \$19 million to the downtown this year" in efforts to revitalize the area.

The Town Hall complex is separate from those efforts, he said.

A proposed I-10 reliever freeway planned for south of downtown and north of the Gila River would also bring traffic to the area, Bryant noted.

The other two town hall meetings will be held from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Oct. 15, at Verrado Middle School, 20880 W. Main St., and Oct. 23 at the Sage Recreation Center in Sun City Festival, 26501 W. Desert Vista Blvd.

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